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THE BACON-SHAKESPEARE PROBLEM.*

"Palmam qui meruit ferat."

IN suggesting, as I do by my title, that there *is* a problem regarding the true authorship of the "Shakespeare" Poems, calling for investigation, I am quite aware what results I may expect for myself. The supporters of the traditional belief on this subject have a pleasant habit of cutting all enquiry short by polite assertions of the lunacy of their opponents.

A recent example of this favourite style of argument may be found in an article in the *Quarterly Review*, for July, 1898. It is a short article, and yet I was able to count in it more than a dozen expressions of such unmitigated contempt for the advocates of the Baconian theory as the following:—

The whole theory is dubbed "Baconomania," or the "Baconian delirium." It "can only be entertained by levity and ignorance." The writers on that side have "the credulity of the less than half-educated;" they are "ignorant of the classics;" they are "extremely stupid people," who write nothing but "puerilities," unless when they become "impudent;" they continually exhibit "their matchless ignorance," and only prove themselves "incapable of believing in genius."

Undeterred by the fear of such criticism, I frankly confess that the "Baconians" seem to me have a very strong case. They may not have absolutely proved it, but they have at least shewn its great probability.

I lay no stress in the argument on Mr. Ignatius Donnelly's alleged "Cryptogram," said to be hidden in certain of the Plays. Not having studied his arithmetical investigations, I venture no opinion of their value.

The evidence that Francis Bacon was closely connected with the authorship of the Shakespeare Plays, which has

* A Paper read to the Uddingston Literary Society, 13 Feb., 1899, by M. W. Strang, of Uddingston, Glasgow.

weighed with me, is altogether of a different kind. I know of no fuller or better statement of it than Mr. Donnelly has given in the first volume of his "Great Cryptogram," which is preliminary to, and quite independent of anything he has to say about the alleged cypher itself.

With regard to the possibility, however, of such a secret cypher underlying certain of the Plays, as Mr. Donnelly professes to have discovered, it may be well to bear in mind

1. That Bacon at the early age of 18 or 19, had already invented a secret system of writing.

2. That even in his old age he continued interested in such studies, and in his great work, *The Advancement of Learning*, advocated a certain secrecy of writing among initiated persons, as one way of leavening society with new teaching.

3. That in the dangerous times of Elizabeth, and James I., when Society was honeycombed with intrigue, and counter-intrigue, it was no uncommon thing for prominent men to cover up their opinions under false names, private pass words, and other like cryptic devices.

4. That the 1623 Folio edition of the Shakespeare Plays, in which Mr. Donnelly claims to find the secret writing, certainly looks as if it were intended to conceal some such thing—what with its many *interpolations* on the older editions, its strange sprinkling of apparently meaningless *italics*, and *hyphenated words*, its *false paging*, and other suspicious features.

But, as already said, I do not dwell on this line of argument. Only this I would like to say to those who may be inclined to reject with scorn the whole suggestion of a secret cypher embodied in the Plays: "Better keep a back-door of retreat open in your denials, lest further investigation should elicit facts too strong to be set aside."

The starting-point of this whole controversy is found in the impossibility of wedding the known facts of Shakspere's education, life and character, to the literary features of the Poems and Plays that go by his name.

I say advisedly "*the known facts*," because the whole realm of Shaksperian apologetic literature is pervaded by *fancies*, having no real foundation in his history as it has been preserved to us. For example, the writer of the Plays was undoubtedly conversant with the *law*—a point to which we shall return later on—and in order to account for this feature in the supposed writings of the man of Stratford, many of his partisans circulate a theory that he must at one time have been articled in a lawyer's office. But impartial

biographers, such as Sidney Lee, Richard Grant White, and others, set the theory aside. There is absolutely no evidence that Shakspere ever even swept out a lawyer's office.

In the same way the meagre details of his life that have come down to us have been eked out by deliberate forgeries, of which an instructive list will be found in Sidney Lee's new "Life of Wm. Shakespeare," or by fancy pictures, such as Mrs. Stopes so plentifully supplies in her book,* prefaced by "It may be supposed," "we cannot but think," and similar phrases, all indicating that the lady is "drawing on her imagination for her facts."

Sticking to admitted facts, we learn that Wm. Shakspere was brought up in a country town, amid country clowns. His father was a tradesman, butcher and general dealer, in Stratford, whose first appearance in the town records is suggestive. He is found "paying a fine of twelve pence for having a dirt-heap in front of his house."† It is claimed that Shakspere's father could write; but if so, strange to say, he frequently preferred to "make his mark" instead of signing his name. Of his mother, it is certain she could not write even her own name.‡

Wm. Shakspere was never known to be studious. Indeed, the most reliable traditions about his career before he went to London are that he was of loose habits, and given to bad company; that he was more than once punished as a poacher; that, at a very early age, he married, in haste, and apparently under compulsion, a woman eight years his senior; and that he went off to London at the age of 22, very much because his ill-deeds and ill-luck combined had made Stratford an undesirable place of abode.§

Had Shakspere been as keen a student as the above facts seem to indicate he was *not*, he would, in the surroundings of his Stratford home, have found great difficulty in following the bent of his desires. Schooling there was next to none; while books were, like sanitary arrangements, cleanliness, and sobriety—conspicuous by their absence. Moreover, on the authority of Sidney Lee, his latest biographer, he had to "leave school at an unusually early age,"‖ owing to his father's growing financial difficulties.

Here is what the late Richard Grant White, a most thorough upholder of the traditional belief as to the authorship of the plays, has to say on the subject:—

* "The Bacon-Shakspere Question," Chap. I. † Sidney Lee's "Life," pp. 4, 5. ‡ *Ibid* pp. 5, 7. § *Ibid* pp. 19—26. ‖ *Ibid*, pp. 17, 18.

"When, at 22 years of age, he fled from Stratford to London, we may be sure he had never seen half-a-dozen books other than his horn-book, his Latin accidence, and a Bible. Probably there were not half-a-dozen others in all Stratford" (*Atlantic Monthly*).

In 1593, six or seven years after Shakspere left Stratford, was first published the poem "Venus and Adonis." In its dedication, it is called "the first heir" of the poet's "invention." As it was not the first of his poems to be printed, this can only mean that it was the first *written*. Hence, critics generally believe that Shakspere wrote it immediately after arrival in London, if, indeed, he did not take it with him in his pocket when he fled from Stratford. This piece was based on a poem of the Latin poet Ovid ("Amores") not, even in our day, accessible to the general reader. Shakespeare's poem was, however, admittedly based on a study of the original, and bore an introductory Latin motto taken from Ovid's work.

Now, that an untutored rustic could have penned this long, classic poem, which for literary finish and polish of diction, is not surpassed by anything in our language, is an extreme demand on our faith. There happens to be extant a specimen of Shakspere's versifying powers about this time, in the shape of a fragment of a lampoon said to have been penned by him against Sir Thomas Lucy, of Stratford, whose game he had interfered with, and whose vengeance he had suffered. A sorry bit of lame, coarse, doggerel it is, of which Shakspere-worshippers are so ashamed that some of them deny its authenticity, and it is carefully excluded from his "whole works."

If internal evidence counts for anything in this question, the youth who wrote the Lucy lampoon and the author of the "Venus and Adonis" could not be the same.

The *incongruity* which thus meets us with the "first heir of the poet's invention," continues to face us all through the subsequent appearances of works from his pen. If it be a "fad" or a "symptom of lunacy" to be struck with it, and count it *a problem requiring investigation*, then it is a weakness shared by some of the keenest intellects of our century, such as Emerson, who declared that he could not "marry" the facts of Shakspere's life "to his verse."*

Thedates of the first appearance of the "Shakespeare" Dramas are not at all certain, and authorities differ widely. Sidney

* "Representative Men."

Lee, the latest authority, whose "Life" is reckoned one of the principal literary successes of 1898, says :—

"There is no external evidence to prove that any piece in which Shakspere had a hand was produced before the spring of 1592. No play by him was *published* before 1597, and none bore his name on title page till 1598." *

During the first few years of this period Shakspere was still occupying a very sordid position (if tradition may be trusted), first as a holder of horses at the theatre-doors, then as a call-boy, and next as a supernumerary and inferior actor. These were not positions likely to put him much in the way of "improving his mind" by the study of literature.

Yet it is of the utmost importance to note that the earliest Plays attributed to him are singled out by critics (without any bias towards Baconian views) as samples of an *academic style.* Some of these critics go the length of describing this early style as *pedantic,* as if the author were a young man fresh from college, wishful to air all his acquirements. This criticism is specially applicable to *Love's Labour Lost,* with its legal jargon, its frequent doses of Latin, its Italian, and other such features which render this Drama unfit for popular representation.

Coleridge says of the author of these early plays :—

"His habits had been *scholastic* and those of a *student.* A young author's first work almost always bespeaks his recent pursuits."

Prof. Baynes also remarks :—

"The immaturity of his mind in these early plays is seen in the extent to which *the smell of the lamp* mingles with the freshness and vigour of poetic feeling. The wide circle of references to Greek fable and Roman story suggests that the writer *had come recently from his books.*" †

Now, it is just here that the advocates of Bacon's authorship have an initial and decided advantage. Granted that Bacon could have been a writer of Dramas—on which point an important word or two anon—then everything in these early Plays which points to the author's being a student and scholar, or, as we might say, a "university man," while it fits with no known fact about Wm. Shakspere, will admirably agree with the well-ascertained facts as to young FRANCIS BACON.

A most precocious youth, his wit and power of courteous

* "Life," p. 50. † "Fraser's Magazine," 1880.

repartee, at the age of 10, attracted the notice of Queen Elizabeth herself. Born of aristocratic lineage, he had from the first all the educational advantages open, in those days, only to the select few. His father was Lord Treasurer to the Queen, and a man of brilliant and original talents. His mother was one of the most accomplished women of her time, able to *write* idiomatic Greek and Latin, and familiar with French and Italian. At the age of *twelve*, Francis' tutors could teach him nothing more; and so he was sent to join his elder brother Anthony at Trinity College, Cambridge.

He studied there for three years, and then left Cambridge, having learned all it could teach him, and, moreover, having, at this early age of 15, discovered that the whole *method* of teaching then in vogue was radically vicious, and could lead to no real, useful increase of knowledge. Already to him, the boy of 15, there had occurred the germs of those *new principles of enquiry* which he afterwards more fully expounded, and which still make his name revered as the true father of all that is best in our modern philosophy and scientific research.

In the next few years he studied Law; resided a good while in France, as an *attaché* of the English Ambassador to the French Court; learned French, Italian and Spanish; was called to the bar at the early age of 21; and continued absorbed in studies, the exact nature of which his biographers have not been able to ascertain.

The supposition that this witty and brilliant young student and scholar—linguist, lawyer, and courtier combined—was the writer of these "academic" Plays, and of the polished "Venus and Adonis," does violence to none of the probabilities. But to believe that a rustic plebeian, whose father and mother made a mark for their signature, suddenly shewed such signs of college culture, without ever being near a college, is rather "a large order" on our faith. In plain English, it is, on the first blush, *quite incredible.*

Wm. Shakspere was undoubtedly a man of talent in his way. He could not otherwise have risen so rapidly, as he did, to be manager of a theatre, to part-proprietorship, and to opulence. This advance bespeaks for him at least a good business capacity and a genial temperament—neither of which we wish to deny him. But such qualifications would never enable any man to exhibit literary gifts or a *scholarly culture* which has been the wonder of the world ever since.

It is open to the gravest doubt whether the Plays ever were really claimed to be by William Shakspere, of Stratford. As

we have seen, they were anonymous till 1598. When, in that year, a name was given on the title page, it was not the Stratford family name, but only *a colourable resemblance of it*, possibly the better to act as a disguise for the real author. The name was printed SHAKESPEARE, sometimes with a hyphen between the syllables, as if indicating a *nom de plume*.

Now, some fifty different ways of spelling the Stratford name in those times have been unearthed, and not one corresponds with this title-page. Wm. Shakspere himself never seems to have signed his name this way. Moreover, the pronunciation of the Stratford name seems to have been *Skaxper* or *Shagsper*, never *Shake-speare*.

We are doing no great violence to literary probability, therefore, in thinking that the name was originally an assumed one.

Our doubts as to Wm. Shakspere's authorship are strengthened by one or two other facts connected with his personal history.

In 1610 he retired from London, a wealthy man, and spent the remaining six years of his life in his native town, in such sordid pursuits as wool-stapling, brewing, and money-lending. But of any further connection of his with literature there is not a trace—which is the more remarkable when we remember that many of the Plays now attributed to him had not yet seen the light.

In 1616, certain further Shakspere records are found, which fill us with fresh scepticism. Judith, the younger daughter of this prince of poets, philosophers, and literary men, was married, and had to sign her marriage bond *with a mark!* Think of it! This man, who, as tradition goes, was familiar with literature of all lands and times, who "knew everything," and made a new era in the English language, adding to its vocabulary some 5,000 new words—this man's daughter was allowed to grow up to womanhood an utter "illiterate," unable to write her own name! Surely the father could not be the lover of books that tradition paints him. It could not be he who penned those frequent condemnations in the Plays of "ignorance, the curse of God," * "barbarous ignorance," † "dull, unfeeling ignorance," ‡ "gross and miserable ignorance." § Clearly, there is a problem here, wanting fearless investigation.

But this is not all we have to say about the year 1616. In it Wm. Shakspere, of Stratford, died—the result, according to

* *2 H. VI.* iv. 7; † *K. John IV.* 2; ‡ *Rich. II.* i. 3; § *2 H. IV.* iv. 2.

the testimony of the local Vicar, of a drinking bout. Be that as it may, what surprises us is this, that this literary prodigy, who had in his day, if tradition is correct, amassed wisdom from books of every sort, *died and left not a book nor manuscript behind him.*

His will is extant. Its details are "minutely particular in the disposition of his goods and chattels, even to his second-best bed, his clothes, his household utensils," but "there is no mention of a book of any kind, no allusion to any papers, works, or manuscripts, or of his interest in any." As an American writer has exclaimed:

"He had $20,000 a year, and not a volume! The man who wrote *Love's Labour Lost,* so learned, so academic, so scholastic in expression and allusion . . . ; the man whose ample page is rich with the transfigured spoils of ages—that man lived without a library!"*

Our scepticism is surely by this time well justified; and it is further strengthened by the fact, just mentioned, that at the time of his death, there were still unpublished some 18 or 19 of the Plays that now go by his name, including such masterpieces as *Macbeth* and *The Tempest.*

Seven years later, in 1623, a large and revised edition of the Dramas appears, containing these 19, of which, it is further to be remarked, *eight or nine had not even been heard of till then;* and among them such works as *Julius Cæsar, Cymbeline,* and *Timon of Athens.*

Where had these works been if Shakspere wrote them before his death? Why did he, who knew so well—none better—the pecuniary value of such things, say never a word of them in his will?

Moreover, of the old Plays, republished in 1623, many were greatly altered, amended, and in some cases enlarged. By whom, seeing the supposed author was seven years in his grave? One Play, *Othello,* was first published in 1622, and a greatly altered edition next year following.

The Preface to this 1623 Edition professes to explain matters, but really leaves us more mystified than ever. It alleges that these are the true original works got from the dead author, and that all previous editions had been pirated—a story which will scarcely bear examination.

It would require us, for example, to believe that some of the finest passages in *Hamlet,* which appeared in these "pirated" quarto editions, but were left out of the 1623 folio edition,

* "Hamlet's Note Book," by W. D. O'Connor.

were not by the Dramatist himself.* Yet critics are now pretty well agreed that they are characteristically his.

I commend Mr. Donnelly's Chap. IV. on the "Lost MSS. and Library" to the study of any one interested in the question.

The fact is, that on the Shaksperian theory, this posthumous publication of the greatest of the Dramas, without any reference in Shakspere's will to their existence, and with the extensive revision which the others had undergone, is *inexplicable.* The only theory, which will give a key to the mystery, is that which maintains that in 1623 the true author was still alive, able to revise, enlarge, and amend his old Plays, and to publish others never before seen; and that this true author was the great *Francis Bacon,* Lord Verulam, who in that same year of 1623, was setting his whole literary house in order by publication of revised editions of all his works.

I am quite aware that, if we disregard everything else, and pin our faith on tradition, there is a certain amount of external testimony to be adduced in its support. There is the aforesaid preface to the 1623 Edition, which attributes the Plays to the dead author. There are the lines (supposed to be by Ben Jonson) affixed to the wooden-looking portrait at the beginning of that volume—lines attributing the works to "gentle Shakspere." There are tributes by Jonson and others of the time, paid to the transcendent genius of the author of the Plays. But there are reasons for not leaning too much on these supports.

1. The statements of the 1623 Preface, as already said, seem to require to be taken "with a grain of salt." If it was the intention of the still-living author to throw dust in the eyes of the public, and continue his *incognito,* that preface would very well serve his purpose.

2. The testimonies of other writers of plays are also open to suspicion. While Shakespere was connected with the Theatre in London, he was not always received with cordiality by his fellows. Indeed he was looked on with great jealousy, not because of his transcendent skill, but, as far as we can make out from the tortuous allusions of the time, because his rivals looked on him as more or less of a *pretender.* Some of them described him as an "upstart crow" in borrowed "feathers;" as a man who "supposed he could bombast out a blank verse as well as any," and managed to enrich himself by "mouthing words that *better wits* had framed."

* See Intro. to "Cambridge" Shakespeare, XXVI.

No one held him up to keener ridicule than Ben Jonson, who nicknamed him "Poet Ape." (*Epig.* 51). When, therefore, we read Ben Jonson's statement, after Shakspere's death, "I loved the man and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any," we are inclined to doubt his sincerity very much. For, during a great part of Shakspere's career, Jonson, if he did not *hate* him, certainly "dissembled his love" for him very thoroughly indeed.

Jonson acted for several years, after Shakspere's death, as private secretary to Bacon. He was likely, therefore, to be a party, in these later years, to any secret that there might be in Bacon's life about this matter; and it is quite possible to understand a great deal of what he wrote in these latter years, in praise of "*Shakespeare*" as intended for the real author of the works that went by that name, without proving anything as to the *personality* behind the name.

Indeed Jonson is one of the leading witnesses called on the Baconian side. For, strange to say, one of the strongest testimonies he has borne to the achievements of the great Dramatist of his time, he has repeated, and *applied to the undoubted person of Sir Francis Bacon.*

He compared "*Shakespeare,*" the Dramatist, with the most famous Playwriters of antiquity, and said:—

> "When thy socks were on,
> *Leave thee alone, for the comparison*
> *Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome*
> *Sent forth,* or since did from their ashes come."

Writing, after *Bacon's* death, he says of him that this is "he that hath *filled up all numbers* and performed that in our tongue which may be compared or *preferred either to insolent Greece or haughty Rome.*"

This tribute is of the utmost importance to our enquiry. In it, Ben Jonson, who shared Bacon's literary labours, declares that *Bacon was a poet,* and a poet of such high standing as to eclipse all antiquity.

I know some Shaksperians kick at this conclusion from his words, and try to make out that when he said Bacon had "*filled up all numbers,*" he was referring to him as an orator. He had been speaking undoubtedly of oratory in others, but Jonson, who was a good Latin scholar, was not at all likely to use the word "numbers" in any other sense than the well-known sense in which Cicero, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, all

use its Latin original, of *musical measure, verse,* or *poetry.** Pope and Milton, after Bacon's day, continued its use in that sense. Pope tells us "he lisped in *numbers,* for *the numbers* came;" meaning, he made verses from his earliest years. And the Shakespearian poems themselves thus fix its sense. For example—

> "But now my gracious *numbers* are decayed,
> And my sick *muse* doth give another place."
> *Sonnet* 79.

> "If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
> And in fresh *numbers* number all your graces,
> The age to come would say, 'This *poet* lies.'"
> *Sonnet* 17.

> "I fear these stubborn *lines* lack power to move;
> O sweet Maria, empress of my love,
> These *numbers* I will tear, and write in *prose.*"
> *Love's Lab. Lost,* iv. 3.

That Bacon should be ranked among the *Poets* is probably as great a surprise to most people as it was to the Unicorn in Lewis Carroll's quaint story to find that children were not the "fabulous monsters" he had always thought them.†

If this controversy should serve no other purpose, it will do much if it help to remove very prevalent misconception as to Bacon's true place in English literature. Apart from the question whether he wrote the "Shakespeare" Plays, there is abundant evidence that he had a highly poetical imagination, and that his *prose* is sparkling with gems of poetic expression, apt similes, pithy and most musically expressed sentiments.

Macaulay has one or two remarkable tributes to his faculties in this respect, *e.g.*, he says he had "the most exquisitely constructed intellect that has ever been bestowed on any of the children of men." Again: "The *poetical faculty* was powerful in Bacon's mind." And again: "No *imagination* was ever at once so strong and so thoroughly subjugated."

Campbell says: "Few *poets deal in finer imagery* than is to be found in Bacon. . . . *His prose is poetry,*"

I might multiply such testimonies, from men who have made a special study of his works. But a few words from the

* Thus Tibullus iv. i. 36:—

"*Numeris* ille, hic *pede libero,* scribit."
"One writes in *verse,* another in *prose.*"

† "Through the Looking-glass."

estimate of that acute French literary critic, *M. Taine*, are perhaps worth quoting.

"Among this band of scholars, philosophers, and dreamers, is Francis Bacon, a great and luminous intellect, *one of the finest of this poetic progeny*, who was naturally disposed to clothe his ideas in the most splendid garb." . . . "He has thought in the manner of *artists* and *poets*, and he speaks after the manner of *prophets and seers*." *

Bacon a dry prosaic writer! Never was more mistaken notion held of any great author. Let any one read his account of the Spanish Armada, and say whether anything more lively or interesting is to be found among historical records. Or take the brief description † of Sir Richard Grenville's mad, yet heroic, fight with his little "Revenge" against overwhelming Spanish odds. Of this, the late Professor Nichol, of Glasgow, declared that it was "not less stirring than" Tennyson's poetic version of the same incident.

One might cull endless instances, from Bacon's most serious writings, of sparkling gems of thought, shewing all the felicity of expression of the poet. For example :—

"Men must learn that, in this theatre of man's life, it is reserved only for God and the angels to be lookers-on" (*Adv. of L.*)

Again, he describes "Antiquities" as

"Remnants of history which have casually escaped the shipwreck of time."

Or what is there finer than his remark, in the Essay on "Friendship ?"

"A crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love."

Again, the writer who in a sober philosophical treatise on "The Nature of Things," describes the ocean as "the solitary handmaid of eternity," had surely in him something capable of the Poet's higher achievements.

In this connection, Baconians have remarked a curious resemblance of style between Bacon's prose, and "Shakespeare," in one respect—*viz*,, a habit of putting pithy sayings into *triple form.* The quotation from the Essay of "Friendship" gave one instance. Here are other six, three from Shakespeare :—

* "History of English Literature." † "Of a war with Spain."

B.—"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."

Sh.—"Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.—*Tw. Night, ii.* 5."

B.—"Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man."

Sh.—"It would be argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest for ever."—1 *Hen. IV. ii.* 2.

B.—"Nature is often hidden, sometimes overcome, seldom extinguished."

Sh..—"To be now a sensible man, by-and-bye a fool, and presently a beast."—*Oth. ii.* 3.

Will candid criticism tell us, apart from any previous knowledge of the respective sources, and *from the style alone*, which are from Bacon and which are from Shakespeare? Might not one man have written them all?

To return to Ben Jonson's evidence. He says Bacon was a *skilled master of verse* or *numbers*. Now, that he *did* write verse requires no proof. Some of his verses are still extant and acknowledged to be his. Opinions differ as to their merits. Some Shaksperians fasten on them with every expression of contempt, as clearly proving that Bacon could not have written the finished lines of "Skakespeare." They judge, however, mostly from a few translations of the Psalms, which he wrote in his old age, and on a sickbed. These, in the nature of things, are not a fair criterion.

Let any of the budding poets of this Society try their hands at turning the Psalms into verse, and they will soon find all the natural buoyancy of their Muse's wings cramped and fettered, and their Pegasus-flights soon brought to earth. Truth to tell, even John Milton, when he took to that kind of exercise, could only write something very poor, just a shade less "wooden" than Tate and Brady. Yet Bacon's few versions of the Psalms will compare favourably with Milton's, and contain some really noble lines. Spedding, his loving biographer (who did not for a moment believe in his identity with "Shakespeare") opines, from these very specimens of his poetic powers, that if he had cultivated his Muse, he could have produced something really great.

There are other fragments of verse attributed to Bacon. One is deserving of notice—a short piece called "The Retired Courtier." I quote only the first verse:—

"His golden locks hath Time to silver turned;
O time too swift! O swiftness never ceasing!

His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurn'd,
But spurned in vain; youth waneth by increasing.
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers, but fading seen;
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green."

This has a decided Shakespearian ring, and seems worthy of any poet. So also a paraphrase of an Epicurean epigram, *undoubtedly by Bacon*, of which I give only one couplet :—

"Who then to frail mortality shall trust,
But limns the water, or but writes in dust."

Bacon, then, *was a Poet*, but there is evidence that he practised his poetic art mostly *in secret*. On the accession of James I., in 1603, Bacon wrote to Sir John Davis, a poet attached to the Court, asking him to render him all possible good offices with the new Sovereign, and he concludes his letter with the strange remark : "So, desiring you *to be good to all* CONCEALED POETS, I continue, &c." This, in the circumstances, could only mean that the writer of the letter was one of that fraternity, and a *concealed Poet*.

Where then, are the works which he thus secretly produced?

Bacon was in the habit of sending to Sir Tobie Matthew, his life-long bosom-friend, for his criticism and approval, all kinds of his literary productions. In his correspondence with Sir Tobie, which survives, his acknowledged serious and philosophical works are openly named. But these same letters have frequent allusions to literary work of a different kind. In one letter Bacon refers to the "works of his *recreation*." In another, his other works are alluded to under the veiled title of the "Alphabet"—a term which there is reason for believing to have been a private password meaning "Tragedies and Comedies" (See Bacon's *Promus*, Entry, 516).

In acknowledging one such budget of literature from Bacon, about the year 1623 (the date is not certain) Sir Tobie Matthew makes the following significant remark :—

"The *most prodigious wit* that ever I knew of my nation, and of this side of the sea, is *of your Lordship's name*, THOUGH HE BE KNOWN BY ANOTHER."

Sir Tobie wrote this from the Continent of Europe, and it is hard to see what else he could mean (though Shaksperians try hard to put another meaning on his words) than this : that his friend, Lord Verulam, Francis Bacon, was the greatest wit whom he knew on either side the English Channel; but that

the works displaying this surpassing wit were circulating under another's name.

This certainly could not apply to his philosophical writings; and goes to confirm all other evidence up to this point, which proves that Bacon was a *Poet* of high skill, but that this fact was unknown to all save a few initiated persons who were in his secret.

On general grounds, it is open to us to believe that these secret productions of his witty Muse may have been connected with the Stage. But there are not wanting direct testimonies that this was so. Dr. Rawley, the chaplain and biographer of Bacon, collected a number of Elegies written of him in Latin after his death. Strange to say—strange, that is, in view of the usual idea of Bacon's literary powers—many of these Elegies praise him in no stinted terms AS A POET. One speaks of him as "Literature's Star . . . who breathed forth *the breath of poetry.*" Others say that "the *Muses* mourn the death of *him who taught them their art,*" and who was himself the "*Tenth Muse.*" Another says that to rightly understand him, we must know him as "a *composer of fiction.*" While yet another describes him as "with a serious purpose *drawing on the socks of comedy*, and the *high-heeled boots of the Athenian tragedian.*"*

These Elegiac tributes are conveniently ignored by the other side; but their evidence is very significant, and they probably convey a fresh surprise to those who thought they knew all about Bacon. *They connect him with the Dramatic Art.*

Now, some Shaksperians have laid great stress on the familiarity with the *technicalities of the Stage* evinced by the writer of the Shakespeare Plays. "Who," they ask, "but an actor could have penned these Stage allusions? Who so likely to have done so as the Actor-Manager to whom they have been so long attributed?"

But it so happens that even here Bacon's claims are strong. If he had one "hobby" above another, it was a fondness for the Stage. From his youth up, he was continually taking part in the getting up of theatrical Masques and Plays among his fellows in Grays Inn and elsewhere. His mother (a bit of a Puritan) was sorely vexed about this *penchant* of his; and possibly his respect for her may have been one reason why originally he did not confess his connection with the theatre.

One fact speaks volumes as to Bacon's familiarity with the

* "The Manes of Francis Bacon," BACONIANA, April, 1898.

technique of the Stage. In 1602 the Grays Inn Benchers and Inner Templars combined to get up a theatrical masque to entertain King James. A contemporary record tells us that Sir Francis Bacon "was the chief contriver" of this masque. Now, at the time, he held the office of Solicitor-General! As Mrs. Pott very well points out, this was in "days when Shakspere and Ben Jonson were at the height of their fame; yet it was neither the one or the other of them, but the Solicitor-General, who was employed to 'contrive,' and ultimately to manage, the first Masque presented to the King. Under similar circumstances, we should expect that Mr. Beerbohm Tree or Sir Henry Irving would be invited to undertake such a management. It would not have occurred to us to apply for help to Sir Edward Clarke, Q.C., M.P."*

The possibility that Bacon could have written the "Shakespeare" Plays having been, I venture to think, so far established, it remains to indicate a few arguments sustaining the probability that he did.

I shall not attempt to set forth these proofs at any length. It would be folly to do so. They form a literature by themselves. All I can do is, indicate a few of the heads under which these proofs are grouped, in the hope that my preliminary argument may have aroused sufficient interest to lead to their being studied for themselves. Their force lies not so much in any one of them singly, as in the *cumulative power* of a thousand and one, all pointing to the same conclusion.

The education, training, and experience of the author of the Plays, as exhibited in their contents and style; his bent of mind, his tastes, his views of human nature, of things material and immaterial, and of a host of general subjects; his choice of words, his invention of new terms—all these points, carefully studied, produce strange and innumerable parallels between his Dramas and Bacon's Prose. So much is this the case, that the best commentary on "Shakespeare" is always found in Bacon on almost any conceivable subject.

Even, in some cases, the stories embodied in the Plays, and the times and circumstances of their publication, are found to fit into the personal history of Bacon, while they have nothing in common with the facts of Shakspere's life.

The Scenes of 1 *Henry VI.* (one of the earliest Plays, although not published till 1623) are laid in those very parts of France where Bacon resided as a youth. The Scene of

* "Francis Bacon and His Secret Society," p. 143.

2 *Henry VI.*, on the other hand, is St. Albans, near which he resided on his return to England, and from which in later years he took his title of Viscount St. Alban.

The great tragedies of *Hamlet* and *Lear** turn much on questions of *madness*. They are usually spoken of as the products of the poet's "dark period." But the man of Stratford, at the time of their appearance, was at the height of financial success, and is not known to have been under a cloud of any kind. It was far otherwise with Bacon. About this very time, his beloved brother Anthony died; his friend Essex was convicted of treason and executed; and—saddest and most significant of all—his mother's mind began to give way, growing worse and worse in the very manner described of Ophelia, until her death some years later.

Such are a few of the curious coincidences which may be traced when we try to fit the Plays and the life of Bacon together. Of themselves they may prove little; but as part of a series of coincidences they have their value.

Much more striking are the points of resemblance—not occasional, but to be reckoned by hundreds—in *thought* and *expression* between the Poems and the Prose works of Bacon. After allowing for some far-fetched and doubtful instances which the eagerness of Baconian advocates has pressed into the service, there still remain a sufficient number of such a kind as can only be explained by getting, as Mr. Donnelly has it, the heads of Bacon and Shakespeare "under one hat."

It need not be counted "flat blasphemy" on the part of Baconians thus to judge of the question of the authorship of the Plays. For the principle is acted on to some extent by Shakesperian critics also. There were some 15 Plays attributed to "Shakespeare" during his life-time, and even published with his name, which these critics almost unanimously reject *on grounds of internal evidence*. Even the latest writer on the subject, Sidney Lee, maintains that in the earlier and the later Plays the author used "collaboration," and composed dramas "*with another's aid.*" † It must never be forgotten that the whole question of the origin, dates of publication, and revisal, &c., of the "Shakespeare" Plays is not one that can be settled off-hand with the ease with which we can trace, for example, the literary history of Tennyson's works.

* First produced, according to Sidney Lee, in 1602 and 1606, respectively.
† S. Lee, "Life," p. 242.

Mr. Wigston has devoted a good part of a bulky volume * to a comparison of the opinions given in Bacon's "Essays" on such topics as Ambition, Envy, Deformity, Suspicion, Malice, Vainglory, Revenge, Usury, &c., &c., with the pictures of such things set forth in leading characters of the Plays. I commend the study as an interesting one, no matter what bearing it may have on the question before us.

Even the *verbal* parallels between the Essays and the Plays are sometimes striking. Here are two examples :—

BACON.	SHAKESPEARE.
"Be so true to thyself as thou be not false to others."—*Ess.* 23.	"To thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man."—*Ham.* i. 3.
"A man that is *young in years* may be *old in hours*, if he have lost no time."—*Ess.* 42.	"Yet hath Sir Proteus . . . Made use and fair advantage of his days, His *years but young*, but *his experience old*."—*Two Gent. Ver.* ii. 4.

A friend lately sent me a Johannesburg paper, containing a report of a lecture by a clergyman of Pretoria on "The Baconian Theory." Needless to say, he dubbed its supporters "cranks and faddists." We would scarcely recognize ourselves unless these pet names were applied to us. But this lecturer, who was neither a "crank" nor a "faddist," went on to say that Bacon's "knowledge of human nature, and of the passions, hopes, and fears by which it is swayed, was most superficial, and entirely inadequate to the production of such works as Shakespeare had given to the world."

One cannot help smiling at off-hand criticism of this sort; for if there be one point of resemblance between the two classes of writings under discussion, more distinct than another, it is this very *knowledge* of *human character* and *conduct*.

Did this critic, one wonders, ever read as much as one of Bacon's famous "Essays?" of which a powerful intellect, such as Archbishop Whateley's, declared :

"Rarely, if ever, do we find any [such] failures in Bacon's speculations on *human character and conduct. It was there that his strength lay;* and *in that department of philosophy* it may safely be said that *he had few to equal*, and *none to excel him.*"†

* "Francis Bacon, Poet, Prophet, Philosopher," 1891.

† "Introd. to Bacon's Essays."

The *Erudition* displayed in the Plays has already bee referred to. This also is capable of ample illustration as a argument for the Baconian authorship.

The author was undoubtedly a *Lawyer*, not a mere dabbler in law, or amateur, but trained to it. Campbell made a special study of this feature of the Plays, and his verdict is that "the writer had a *deep technical knowledge of the law*," and was familiar with "*some of the most abstruse proceedings* in *English jurisprudence*."

This knowledge appears also in a curious preference for legal expressions, metaphors, and other allusions, in some of the most unlikely places; as, *e.g.*, in *Love's Lab. Lost*, in a lover's dialogue over the right of taking a kiss! Evidently, as Mr. Donnelly remarks, "The author was brimming full of legal phraseology." It is idle to pretend that Shakspere, or any other man, however heaven-born his genius, could have acquired this legal tone by mending quills in a lawyer's office for a few months, or gossiping with lawyers in the Courts or in taverns!

Again, the knowledge of other languages shewn in the Plays while it puts Shakspere's claims in great doubt, agrees in every way with Bacon's. Bacon knew French and Italian well. And there is no doubt the writer of the Plays was also able to use these languages for himself. Some whole scenes are written in French. And as for Italian, Iago's famous speech to Othello:

"Who steals my purse steals trash, &c."

is taken, with little variation, from a stanza of Berni's *Orlando Innamorato*, of which poem, *to this day, there is no English version.* I would not venture to quote any Baconian in support of this last fact; for are they not all "half-educated" persons? My authority is Richard Grant White, a leading critic on the Shaksperian side.

Then as regards the *classical* flavor of the Plays, it is not so much a question of allusion to Roman or Greek legend or history. The plays abound in these, but it is conceivable that many of them might have been derived from a diligent use of translations, without any familiarity with the originals. But in the Plays we are often struck with the author's use of *Latin derivatives* (many of them of his own coining), with a nicety of meaning in strict conformity to the original, only possible to a classical scholar, and indeed sometimes scarcely understandable to an ordinary reader.

Burns, with all his genius, could never have written in Milton's style ; for Milton was a scholar, and used a scholar's vocabulary. John Bright, with all his eloquence, never got far away from his terse Anglo-Saxon ; and therein his oratory differed from that of Mr. Gladstone, whose bookish training and habits appeared in the more ornate and cumbrous style of his speech.

Thus, too, when we find in the Plays such scholastic words (many of them quite new) as "rondure, vastidity, exsufflicate, incarnadine, procreant, deracinate, conflux, tortive," &c., we conclude the writer was a bookish man, and must have spent much time in his library—an apartment, which, as we have seen, Shakspere did not possess.

Here everything consorts with the Baconian theory ; for Bacon's prose writings present just the same features of what some would call *pedantry* as this aspect of the Plays.

There are also many odd and uncommon words and expressions common to both. Many instances will be found collected in Mr. Donnelly's book. Let me mention one by way of illustration :—

> "A beast that wants *discourse of reason*."
>
> *Hamlet* i. 2.

This singular phrase, "discourse of reason," has seemed to some critics to want emendation. But it is a favorite phrase of Bacon's, occurring several times in his writings.

Such features of this enquiry might be dwelt on indefinitely ; but I must hasten to conclude this already too lengthy paper, by referring to two bits of evidence that seem to go beyond anything so far advanced, and to prove conclusively that Bacon had something to do with the production of "Shakespeare's" Plays.

I. In 1867 a curious *M.S.*, once belonging to Bacon, was found in *Northumberland House*. It was an unbound volume of manuscript pieces, some of which have disappeared from the volume. But the Table of Contents remains, and is very instructive. It includes some undoubted works of Bacon, such as some of his speeches, and a quasi-dramatic piece entitled "A Conference of Pleasure." But among the rest are two pieces entitled *Richard II.* and *Richard III.* These pieces themselves have been removed.

But more significant still are the scribblings on the cover. The names of *Francis Bacon* and *William Shakespeare* are scribbled several times. There is also a line from *Lucrece*, and

a jaw-breaking Latin word *honoraficabilitudino*—a word which, strange to say, occurs with a slightly altered termination (the *ablative plural* instead of *nom. sing.*) in *Love's Labour Lost*—dragged in there, as if by the hair of the head.

What does all this bringing together of Bacon and Shakespeare's names, and of such Shaksperian titles and clues, in a Baconian MS., mean? As Mr. R. M. Theobald says:—

"The only place in the world where we can be sure that the MSS. of two of Shakespeare's Plays once existed is *Bacon's Portfolio.*"*

This significant fact suits the Baconian theory admirably: it is hard to see what the other side can do with it, except pooh-pooh it, after their manner.

II. Still more significant is the evidence of Bacon's "Promus"—an undoubted MS. in Bacon's own handwriting, which lay neglected in the British Museum till 1883, when it was edited and published, with illustrations from "Shakespeare," by Mrs. Henry Pott.

Promus means a *store-house, larder*, or collection of what we may call "raw material" to be worked up. Bacon's MS. so described, was a miscellaneous collection of literary jottings, a "commonplace book." It contains 1655 entries, sometimes single words, mostly short phrases, quotations, or proverbs, in English, Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, or Greek. Many of the jottings are forms of salutation, or conversational turns of speech. The collection was evidently "made by Bacon with a view of enriching his vocabulary, and helping his literary invention." It bears the date 1594, and is allowed to have been made in the earlier part of his life.

It is not too much to say that the publication of this book has altered the whole aspect of this controversy. For what purpose did Bacon make these notes and how did he afterwards use them? Many of them are quite out of keeping with anything of a sober, or philosophical kind which he ever wrote. So much so, that Spedding, in editing Bacon's Prose Works, left this MS. unpublished, because he could make nothing of it in their connection.

But Mrs. Pott has shewn that, though the jottings have little to do with Bacon's prose works, they reappear many times in "Shakespeare"—about 3,000 times, she claims, but we are willing to allow a very liberal discount to objectors, off that number, for those that are not perhaps unquestionable.

Now, Shaksperians fight shy of this book, and for a very

* "Dethroning Shakspere," p. 160.

good reason. Mrs. Stopes, for example, in her "Bacon-Shakspere Question Answered," which was greeted by an omniscient press as having ended the Baconian claims finally—dismisses it in a line: "I do not think it proves much. The quotations were evidently not original"; * as if "quotations" were usually original! Other critics, like the *Quarterly Reviewer*, † select a few of the most doubtful of Mrs. Pott's parallels, and hold these up to cheap ridicule as a sample of the whole—a great saving of trouble, certainly, to those too prejudiced or too lazy to examine the work for themselves.

But let us take a half-dozen samples for ourselves, and judge;—

BACON'S *PROMUS*.	SHAKESPEARE.
No. 889.—Clavum clavo pellere = with one nail to drive out another.	"One nail by strength drives out another."—*Two Gent. of V.* ii. 4. "One fire drives out one fire, One nail one nail."—*Cor.* iv. 6.
No. 72.—"He who dissembles is not free." No. 477.—"All is not gold that glisters." No. 106.—"A fool's bolt is soon shot." No. 472.—"Seldom cometh the better." No. 1455.—Παθηματα μαθηματα = Our sufferings are our teachers (*lit.* Afflictions (are) a schooling)."	"The dissembler is a slave."—*Per.* i. 1. "All that glisters is not gold."—*M. of V.* ii. 7. "A fool's bolt is soon shot."—*Hen. V.* iii. 7. "Seldome cometh the better."—*Rich. III.* ii. 2. "Give *sorrow* leave a while to *tutor* me."—*Rich. II.* iv. 1. "To sinful men, the injuries that they themselves procure, must be their schoolmasters."—*Lear* ii. 4.
No. 391.—"Tantaene animis celestibus irae?"—*Virg. Aen.* i. 15. No. 872.—"Haile of pearle."	"What, Cardinal, is your priesthood grown peremptory? Tantaene animis, &c."—2 *Hen. VI.* 1. "I'll set thee in a shower of gold, And *hail* rich *pearls* upon thee." —*Ant. Cl.* iii. 5.

There is surely no dubiety about these parallels. They are striking enough to whet the appetite for more. But I refrain. Only this has to be noted. The *Promus* was written before the Plays above quoted, and long before many of them were printed. It had prior existence. Therefore, if there was borrowing, it was the writer of the Plays who borrowed. But where did he get *Bacon's private note-book* to borrow from?

There are two entries in *Promus* specially pointing to a con-

* "Bacon-Shakspere Question," p. 191. † July, 1898

nection with the Plays :—No. 1165. "The law at Twickenham for ye Merry Tales."

Now, what had a grave lawyer, or dry philosopher, in view with such a jotting? But if Bacon wrote those bright Comedies whose legal knowledge has startled the critics, then all is clear.

Again, No. 1200 is the name *Romeo* in a contracted form. What had Bacon to do jotting down that lover's name? A good deal, if he wrote *Romeo and Juliet*. And this brings me to the final point of proof with which I shall at present try your patience.

Mrs. Pott some years ago published proof, collected with her usual patience and industry, that the Play of *Romeo and Juliet* had been at least revised with the help of the *Promus* notes. She took the editions of 1597 and that of 1599, and gave about 80 examples where the earlier edition had been altered or enlarged in the later, every one of which alterations in some way or other used up some note found in Bacon's *Promus*. As that note-book was, as already said, his private property, it is clear from this that he had a hand in revising this one at least of Shakespeare's Plays. And if it be proved that he had even that connection, it is not difficult to go a step further, and believe he revised it, because he had the best of rights to do so, being the true author.

Here I must leave the subject, feeling that after all I have but touched its fringe. May I at least venture to believe that I have shewn that the Baconian view is not such a "ridiculous craze" as it is so usually deemed, but a sober theory based on a good few facts, and deserving of candid consideration?

If I should be asked—as most likely I may—what does it matter who wrote the works we know by the name of Shakespeare? I reply: in one sense, nothing; but in another very much. *All* purely literary questions, if judged by a certain standard dear to this mercenary age, are valueless. But if any question should interest literary minds, this surely should.

Historical truth is valuable for its own sake. Moreover, if it be true that *Bacon* was the true author of the Shakespeare Poems, let critics and commentators cease wandering fruitlessly about Stratford for elucidation of these writings, and find a fuller and clearer light on their depths and beauties in Bacon's life and works.

If Bacon be the author of these Poems, they remain not one whit less the "acme" of our English tongue. But we shall be placing the laurels on the rightful brow—on his who, dying,

bequeathed his name and fame, with strange foresight, "*to the next ages.*" In Francis Bacon we shall acknowledge not only an eminent Lawyer, Statesman, and Philosopher, not only the father of modern Science ; but also the greatest Dramatic Poet the world has seen, and in this combination of glories find a proof that he had, indeed, as Macaulay said, "the most exquisite intellect ever bestowed on any of the sons of men."

THE CHRONICLE PLAYS.—II

(*Continued.*)

THE following finds reflection in the Plays,—the coupling of the best soldiers, with the plough, and rural life, by Bacon :—"Certainly Virgil coupled Arms and the Plough together well in the constitution of ancient Italy :

"'*Terra potens armis atque ubere glebæ.*

"'*For it is the plough that yieldeth the best soldier ;* but how ?—'Maintained in plenty and in the hand of owners, and not of mere labourers.'"

—"The Greatness of Kingdoms" Essays, 1612.

This is somewhat varied in the Essay of 1625 (British Museum Copy), as follows :—"In regard, the middle people of England (*Coloni, et inferioris Ordines Homines*—farmers and men of the lower orders), make good soldiers, which the peasants of France do not. And herein, the device of King Henry the Seventh, was profound, and admirable, in making farms, and houses of husbandry of a standard ; that is, maintained with such a proportion of land unto them, as may breed a subject, to live in convenient plenty, and no servile condition ; and to keep the plough in the hand of the owners, and not mere hirelings. And thus indeed, you shall attain to Virgil's character, which he gives to ancient Italy—*Terra potens armis atque ubere glebæ* (a land powerful in arms and fruitful of soil.—Æneid i., 531). Neither is that state (which for anything I know, is almost peculiar to England), to be passed over ; I mean the state of Free Servants, and Attendants upon noblemen and gentlemen, which are no ways inferior to the *Yeomanry* for arms."—*Ib.* 1625.

Now directly we turn to the Plays, we find English soldiers, called *Yeomen, as by Bacon, and also coupled with the soil.*

Henry the Fifth, before Harfleur (urging his soldiers to the breach), exclaims :—

> On, on, you noblest English,
> Whose blood is fet from fathers of war proof !
> . . . . .
> And you, good *yeomen*,
> Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
> *The mettle of your pasture*, let us swear
> That you are worth your *breeding*.
> —*K. Henry V.*, Act III., i. 25.

The reader will observe this connotation of arms with pasture and plough.

Bacon writes :—" Neither is the authority of Machiavel to be despised, who scorneth the proverb of estate, taken first from a speech of Mucianus—' That moneys are the sinews of war.' And saith : ' *There are no true sinews of war, but the very sinews of the arms of valiant men.*' "—" Naturalization of the Scottish Nation," p. 22 ; " Resuscitatio," 1661.

This coupling of *arms with sinews*, finds repeated reflection in the Plays. Talbot, upon surprising the Countess of Auvergne, with his soldiers, exclaims of them :—

> These are his substance, *sinews*, *arms*, and strength,
> With which he yoketh your rebellious necks,
> Razeth your cities and subverts your towns,
> And in a moment makes them desolate.
> —1 *K. Henry VI.*, Act II., iii.

Bacon says :—" Crœsus boasted of his gold, but Solon said to him, contrary to his expectations : *Why, sir, if another come, that hath better iron than you, he will be lord of all your gold.*"—" Resuscitatio," 1661, p. 22.

Writing of England, Bacon remarks :—" This island of Britanny, seated and manned as it is, and that hath (I make no question) *the best iron in the world—that is, the best soldiers in the world.*"—*Ib. p.* 23 ; " Resuscitatio," 1661.

Henry the Fifth, who may stand as the typical English soldier of the Plays, thus describes himself, to Katharine of France :—

" Now, beshrew my father's ambition ! He was thinking of civil wars when he got me ;—therefore was I created with a stubborn outside, *with an aspect of iron*, that when I come to woo ladies, I fright them."—*K. Henry V.*, Act V., ii. 245.

So Richmond in his prayer, just before the battle of Bosworth, exclaims :—

> Look on my forces with a gracious eye,
> Put in their hands thy *bruising irons* of wrath.
> —*Richard III.*, Act V., iii. 110.

Compare :—

> Than now to see you here *an iron man*,
> Cheering a rout of rebels with your drum,
> Turning the word to sword, and life to death.
> —2 *K. Henry IV.*, Act IV., ii.

But the most direct convincing illustration of the Baconian identification of the British soldier *with iron* is still to come. It is to be found in the conversation of the Constable of France, with Rambures, in the Play of *King Henry the Fifth* :—

Rambures.—The island of England breeds very valiant creatures; their mastiffs are of unmatchable courage. . . .

Constable.—Just, just; and the men do sympathize with the mastiffs in robustious and rough coming on, leaving their wits with their wives. *And then give them great meals of beef, and iron and steel, they will eat like wolves, and fight like devils.—Henry V.*, iii. 7.

So (in keeping with this idea), we read in the Plays, of "*tales of iron wars.*"—1 *Henry IV.*, ii. 3.

> With harsh resounding trumpets dreadful bray,
> And grating shock of wrathful *iron arms*.
> —*K. Richard II.*, Act I., iii.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Spin to the rescue of the noble Talbot,
> Who now is girdled with a waist of *iron*.
> —1 *K. Henry VI.*, Act IV., iii. 21.

In his Essay of the "True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates," Bacon writes :—"*To be master of the sea, is an abridgement of a Monarchy.* Cicero writing to Atticus, of Pompey his preparation against Cæsar, saith : *Consilium Pompeii planè Themistocleum est; putat enim, qui mari potitur, eum Rerum potiri* (*i.e.*, 'The counsel of Pompey is evidently that of Themistocles : for he thinks that he who is *master of the sea will rule all things*'). And without doubt, Pompey had tired out Cæsar, if upon vain confidence, *he had not left that way.*"—Essay "Greatness of Kingdoms," Etc., 1625. (British Museum Copy.)

This passage is to be discovered, perfectly paralleled in action, in the Play of *Antony and Cleopatra.* We find Pompey described as *master of the sea* :—

> *Lepidus.*—Of us must Pompey presently be sought,
> Or else he seeks out us.
> *Antony.*—Where lies he?
> *Cæsar.*—About the mount Misenum.
> *Ant.*—What is his strength by land?
> *Cæsar.*—Great and increasing: *but by sea*
> *He is an absolute master.*—Act II., ii. 162.
>
> . . . . .

Pompey.—I shall do well.
The people love me, *and the sea is mine.*—Act II., i.
. . . . .

Antony exclaims:—Sextus Pompeius
Hath given the dare to Cæsar, *and commands*
The Empire of the sea.—Act I., ii. 190.

It was Pompey's vain confidence, that caused him to enter into a treaty, or alliance with Cæsar and Antony, depicted in the sixth and seventh scenes, of the second act, of the Play. One of the articles of the treaty was :—

Pompey.—You have made me offer
Of Sicily Sardinia; and I must
Rid all the sea of pirates; then to send
Measures of wheat to Rome; this 'greed upon,
To part with unhack'd edges, and bear back
Our targes undinted.—Act II., vi.

Pompey accepted this offer, and lost with it his fortunes, for in exchange for what was a trifle, he relinquished his sovereignty of power by sea, and his advantage over Cæsar. Menas, who thoroughly realized the folly of Pompey's act, exclaims of the meeting or treaty :—

For my part, I am sorry it has turned to a drinking.
Pompey doth this day laugh away his fortune.—Act II., vi. 109.

In the seventh scene Menas proposes to cut the cable of Pompey's galley, in which Cæsar, Antony, and Lepidus, are seated at a banquet :—

Menas.—Thou art, if thou darest be, the earthly Jove :
Whate'er the ocean pales, or sky inclips,
Is thine, if thou wilt ha't.
Pompey.—Show me the way.
Menas.—These three world-sharers, these competitors,
Are in thy vessel : let me cut the cable ;
And, when we are put off, fall to their throats :
All there is thine.
Pompey.—Ah, this thou should'st have done,
And not have spoken on't ! In me 'tis villainy;
In thee 't had been good service. Thou must know,
'Tis not my profit that does lead mine honour;
Mine honour, it. Repent that e'er thy tongue
Hath so betray'd thine act : *being done unknown,*
I should have found it afterwards well done ;
But must condemn it now.
Menas.—For this,
I'll never follow thy pall'd fortune more.
Who seeks, and will not take when once 'tis offered,
Shall never find it more.—*Ant. and Cleo.*, Act. II., vii.

Bacon throws a light upon the character of Pompey, in a passage, which seems written, with an eye to the above

quotation, in which he describes him:—"Pompey, who tended to the same ends, but by more umbraginous and obscure ways (as Tacitus saith of him, *Occultor non melior;* a censure wherein Sallust concurs, *Ore probo, animo inverecundo*), made it his design, and endeavoured by infinite engines, that deeply hiding his boundless desires and ambition, he might in the meanspace, cast the state into an anarchy and confusion, whereby the state must necessarily cast itself into his arms for protection, and so the sovereign power be put upon him, *and he never seen in it.*"—Page 414, "Liber" viii.; "Advt. of Learning," 1640.

These acts of deep dissimulation are reflected in the Play, for we see that Pompey was quite willing Menas should have assassinated Cæsar, and Antony, so long that he (Pompey) was "*never seen in it.*"

Bacon writes, in his Essay of "The Greatness of Kingdoms":—"Walled towns, stored arsenals, and armouries, goodly races of horses, chariots of war, elephants, ordnance, artillery, and the like, all this is *but a sheep in a lion's skin, except the breed and disposition be stout and warlike.*"—British Museum Copy, 1625.

Talbot, rallying his soldiers before Orleans, exclaims to them:—

> **Hark countrymen! Either renew the fight,**
> ***Or tear the lions out of England's coat;***
> ***Renounce your soil, give sheep in lions stead.***
> **Sheep run not half so treacherous from the wolf,**
> **Or horse, or oxen from the leopard,**
> **As you fly from your oft-subdued slaves.**
>
> —1 *K. Henry VI.*, Act I., v. 28.

The reader will observe, what stress is laid, upon the *breeding* of the English soldier or yeomen, by Henry the Fifth, which is echo of Bacon's words!

In his Essay upon "Vain-Glory," we find Bacon saying: "In military commanders and soldiers, *Vain-Glory* is an essential point, *for as iron sharpens iron, so by glory one courage sharpeneth another.*"—"Vain-Glory" Essay, 1625. (British Museum Copy.)

The death of Percy is described by Morton (a retainer of the Northumberland's) thus:—

> ***For from his metal was his party steel'd;***
> **Which once in him abated, all the rest**
> **Turn'd on themselves, like dull and heavy lead.**
> **And as the thing that's heavy in itself,**
> **Upon enforcement flies with greatest speed,**
> **So did our men, heavy in Hotspur's loss.**
>
> —2 *K. Henry IV.*, Act I., i. 115.

Bacon observes: "That the principal part of a country's greatness, *is a race of military men.*"—Page 473, Essays, "Arber."

Also of the Navy: "The might of the Navy, and augmentation of the shipping of the realm, is so advanced, as this Island is become (as the natural site thereof deserveth) *the Lady of the Sea.*"—Page 114, "Resus.," 1661.

Bacon writes:—"But the son of an *attainted person*, born before the *attainder*, shall not inherit, as the after-born shall, notwithstanding *charter of pardon.*"—"Speech on the Union of Laws, and Naturalization of Scotland," p. 29, "Resus.," 1661.

This very point in all its issues, finds its complete illustration, in the case of Richard Plantagenet, son of the Earl of Cambridge, the latter having been attainted of high treason, and executed, in King Henry the Fifth's reign, together with Lord Scroop, and Sir Thomas Grey, at Southampton, depicted in the second scene, of Act II., *King Henry V.* We find, in the celebrated scene, of the plucking, of the white and red roses, in the Temple Gardens, Somerset calling Richard Plantagenet a yeoman, on the plea, that he, *by his father's attainder, had forfeited his title, and ancient gentry.*

Somerset.—Was not thy father Richard Earl of Cambridge,
For treason executed in our late King's days?
And, by his treason, stand'st not thou attainted,
Corrupted, and exempt from ancient gentry?
His trespass yet lives guilty in thy blood;
And, till thou be restored, thou art a yeoman.
—1 *K. Henry VI.*, Act II., iv.

In the first scene, of the next act, we find this *charter of pardon*, extended by King Henry the Sixth, to Richard Plantagenet:—

King.—Therefore, my loving lords, our pleasure is
That Richard be restored to his blood.
Warwick.—Let Richard be restored to his blood;
So shall his father's wrongs be recompensed.
—1 *K. Henry VI.*, Act III., i. 158.

Bacon writes:—"Your lordships see what monstrous opinions these are; and how both these beasts, the beast with seven heads, *and the beast with many heads,* * *Pope and the people,* are at once let in, and set upon the sacred persons of kings."—Page 57, "Resuscitatio," 1661.

Compare:—

* This expression is borrowed from the Latin, "Bellua multorum capitum."

Coriolanus.—Come, leave your tears. A brief farewell: *the beast*
With many heads butts me away.
—*Coriol.*, Act IV., i. 1.

Coriolanus is alluding to his banishment, or ostracism, at the hands of the people of Rome, whom he calls, "the beast with many heads," as Bacon does.

Bacon writes:—"But, Scotland was ever rather used by France, *as a diversion of an English invasion upon France*, than as a commodity of a French invasion upon England."—"Observations of a Libel," 1592; p. 120, "Resuscitatio," 1661.

Compare:—

K. Henry.—For you shall read that my great-grandfather
Never went with his forces into France,
But that the Scot on his unfurnished kingdom
Came pouring, like the tide into a breach,
With ample and brimfulness of his force
Galling the gleaned land with hot essays,
Girding with grievous siege castles and towns;
That England, being empty of defence
Hath shook and trembled at the ill neighbourhood.
. . . . . .

Westmoreland.—But there's a saying very old and true,
"If that you will France win
Then with Scotland first begin:"
For once the eagle England being in prey,
To her unguarded nest the weasel Scot
Comes sneaking and so sucks her princely eggs,
Playing the mouse in absence of the cat,
To tear and havoc more than she can eat.
—*K. Henry V.*, Act I., ii. 147.

Of King Henry the Fifth's reign, Bacon observes—"And for King Kenry the Fifth, as his success was wonderful, so he wanted continuance, being extinguished after ten years in the prime of his fortune. Now for her Majesty (Queen Elizabeth), we will first speak of the blessing of continuance. For that sentence of the Scripture, '*Misera natio, cum multi sunt principes ejus*,' is interpreted not only to extend to divisions and distractions in government, but also to frequent changes in succession."—Page 110, "Resuscitatio," 1661.

The "*want of continuance*," or shortness of Henry the Fifth's reign is twice noted in the Plays.

Small time, but in that small most greatly lived
This star of England.—Epilogue to *K. Henry V.*, Act V., ii.
King Henry the Fifth too famous to live long.
—1 *K. Henry VI.*, Act I., i.

Bacon quotes the Bible to the effect that:—"That nation

is miserable, which has '*too many princes.*'" This was exactly the case with England in the succeeding reign, of which Bacon was probably thinking. For owing to the long minority of King Henry the Sixth, all the troubles of the Wars of the Roses, may be attributed to the many princes of the houses of Lancaster and York, with their rivalries for the protectorship, and their private ambitions for the throne.

> Henry the Sixth, in infant bands crown'd King
> Of France and England, did this King succeed
> *Whose state so many had the managing*
> That they lost France, and made his England bleed.
> —Epilogue to *K. Henry V.*, Act V., ii.

These princes were, Cardinal Beaufort, great-uncle to the King; the Duke of Gloucester, uncle to Henry the Sixth (and protector); Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York; and it is the factions of the former two, which are presented to us quarrelling in the third scene of Act. I. (1 *King Henry VI.*).

> *Messenger.*—Amongst the soldiers this is muttered
> That here you maintain several factions,
> And whilst a field should be despatch'd and fought
> You are disputing of your generals.
> —1 *K. Henry VI.*, Act I., i.

Exactly the same may be observed of the succeeding, reign and troubles depicted in the Play of *K. Richard III.* Owing to the youth of the two unhappy sons of Edward the Fifth, they gave occasion to become the victims of the ambition of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard the Third. In this Play we find a citizen exclaiming:—

> *Third Citizen.*—Woe to that land that's governed by a child!
> *Second Citizen.*—In him there is a hope of government,
> That in his nonage council under him,
> And, in his full and ripened years himself,
> No doubt, shall then, and till then, govern well.
> *First Citizen.*—So stood the state when Henry the Sixth
> Was crown'd in Paris but at nine months old.
> *Third Citizen.*—Stood the state so? No, no, good friends, God wot;
> For then this land was famously enriched
> With politic grave counsel; then the King
> *Had virtuous uncles to protect his grace.*
> *First Citizen.*—Why so hath this, both by the father and mother.
> *Third Citizen.*—Better it were they all came by the father,
> Or by the father there were none at all;
> For emulation now who shall be nearest,
> Will touch us all too near, if God prevent not.
> O, full of danger is the Duke of Gloucester!
> And the Queen's sons and brothers haught and proud;
> And were they to be ruled, and not to rule
> This sickly land might solace as before.
> —*K. Rich. III.*, Act II., iii.

In these uncles of the Royal house, we have the real causes of the Wars of the Roses, and the realisation of Bacon's text: "Misera natio, cum multi sunt principes ejus."

In Bacon's "*Beginning of the History of Great Britain,*" we read:—"That after Queen Elizabeth's decease, there must follow in England, *nothing but confusions, interregnums, and perturbations of estate, likely to exceed the ancient calamities of the civil wars between the Houses of Lancaster and York.*"—Page 221, "Resuscitatio," 1661.

It is exactly after this excellent comparison, that the Plays embracing the Wars of the Roses are written—and indeed all these confusions, and calamities of estate, are thus summed up by Richmond, after the defeat of Richard the Third at Bosworth Field—

England hath long been mad, and scarr'd herself.

Among the many wonders of Bacon's pen, nothing is perhaps more remarkable, than the following prophecy of England's future colonial empire:—"Thirdly this kingdom, now first, in his majesties' times, hath gotten a lot, or portion, in the new world, by the plantation of *Virginia*, and the *Summer Islands*, and certainly it is with the kingdoms on earth, as it is, in the kingdom of heaven. *Sometimes a mustard seed, proves a great tree. Who can tell?*"—A Speech in Parliament, p. 96, "Resuscitatio," 1661.

Of Ireland he writes: describing its "*kierns and swordsmen*" (p. 263, "Resus.") and its "race and generation of men valiant, hard and active" (on Irishmen, p. 258, *Ib.*).

Compare:—

The uncivil *kierns* of Ireland are in arms
And temper clay with blood of Englishmen.
2 *K. Henry VI.*, Act III., i. 310.

In the Play of *K. Henry VI.*, there is to be found the celebrated episode, laid at St. Albans, of the detection of the impostor Saunder, Simcox, by the good Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. A man, who declares he was born blind, suddenly recovers his sight, and attributes it to a miracle just performed at the shrine of St. Alban.

[*Enter a townsman of St. Albans, crying, "A miracle!"*]

Gloucester.—**What means this noise?**
Fellow, what miracle dost thou proclaim?
Towns.—**A miracle! A miracle!**
Suffolk.—**Come to the King and tell him what miracle.**
Towns.—**Forsooth, a blind man at St. Alban's shrine,**

Within this half-hour hath received his sight.
A man that ne'er saw in his life before.
—2 *K. Henry VI.*, Act II., i. 59.

The blind man is brought before the King, and the Protector, Duke Humphrey. The latter questions him, as to his lameness, and the cause of it, which he is told, was caused by a fall from a plum-tree, which he climbed in order to pick damsons. This reply naturally awakens the suspicions of the Duke, who forthwith proceeds to question Simcox, *as to the colours of certain objects*, such as cloaks and gowns, which they are wearing. The impostor, not perceiving the subtlety of these test proofs of his veracity, falls at once into the trap, and glibly enough gives the correct answers, showing *a too perfect distinction of colours*, or *their right names*, for a man who was blind from his birth up to within half-an-hour of his interrogation-

Glouc.—What colour is this cloak of?
Simp.—Red, master; red as blood;
Glouc.—Why, that's well said. What colour is my gown of?
Simp.—Black, forsooth: coal black as jet.
King.—Why, then, thou know'st what colour jet is of.
Suffolk.—And yet I think, jet did he never see.
Glouc.—But cloaks and gowns, before this day, a many.
Wife.—Never, before this day, in all his life.
Glouc.—Tell me, sirrah, what's my name?
Simp.—Alas, master, I know not.
Glouc.—What's his name?
Simp.—I know not.
Glouc.—Nor his?
Simp.—No, indeed, master.
Glouc.—What's thine own name?
Simp.—Saunder Simcox, an if it please you, master.
Glouc.—Then, Saunder, sit there, the lyingest knave in Christendom. If thou had'st been born blind, thou might'st as well have known all our names as thus to name the several colours we do wear. Sight may distinguish of colours, *but suddenly to nominate them all it is impossible.*
2 *K. Henry VI.*, Act II., i. 109.

Bacon writes:—"But reason teacheth us, that in ignorance, and implied belief, it is easy to agree *as colours agree in the dark.*"—Page 118, "Resuscitatio," 1661. (Observations on a libel).

Inasmuch as ignorance is a species of mental blindness, or darkness, this parable might be applied with profit, to the problem of the authorship of the Plays, particularly by those who cannot distinguish, or *nominate, the Baconian colours, or mind in the Plays!* The fact this episode is laid at St. Albans (Bacon's native town, and home so to speak), and turns upon *impostorship* must excite speculation, and questioning in every profound mind. There is a sort of dumb sermon, in the

episode full of eloquent significance, if we only choose to see it. It seems to say—"Impostorship is always to be detected, so be it, there is subtlety enough in the process of detection, and in the interrogation. How could Shakespeare, *nominate so many things in his supposed writings, which we are sure he could not have known; one of them being this historical episode which really occurred at St. Albans, and was of course a familiar story to Lord Bacon?*" To my mind, it seems pretty certain, that Bacon was thinking of Simcox, of his detection, by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, when he entered this remark, that, "*Colours agree in the dark*,"—that is to say, it is impossible to nominate the differences of colours, if one has only just recovered from a life-long blindness, half-an-hour ago.

W. F. C. WIGSTON.

NOTES ON THE PROŒMIUM TO THE GREAT INSTAURATION.

IT may not be amiss now and again to turn from consideration of what has been thought, said, or written about Francis of Verulam, to the more important examination and consideration of his own statements concerning himself, his aims, and his work. For indeed there is a strong ground for believing that amongst the many who are interested in hearing or reading what is said by others upon our wonderful but mysterious subject, there are comparatively few who have *read*, much less *studied and examined*, his work as a whole.

We desire on the present occasion to direct attention to the *Proœmium* or Introductory Pages which precede the Dedication and the Preface to the "Great Instauration." The piece is very short, only two pages; but it is very full of suggestion as well as information. Three points especially demand notice from the reader, and tend to confirm the growing opinion as to the universal as well as the unique authorship which some of us claim for our Concealed Poet.

(1.) *Francis of Verulam was solitary in his work*, and well aware how solitary an enterprise was his, "the total reconstruction," namely, of all human knowledge. He knew that this project would seem to others to be infinite and beyond the powers of man; he had "found no man hitherto who had applied his mind to the like, and he knew not how long it

might be before these things might occur to anyone else, therefore he was resolved to publish what he had completed.

In the Dedicatory Epistle he repeats that, "Certainly these things are *quite new; totally new in their very kind*, yet they are copies from a very ancient model, even the world itself, and the nature of things and of the mind."

Such utterances as these, frequently though in various ways reiterated, should be sufficient to put an end to the kind of argument by which it has often been endeavoured to silence our claims for "Francis" by saying that his knowledge, his theories, his imagery, his diction, his words, were "in the air" or "public property." In the air they were not, until he, the Great Orpheus had "charmed the air to give a sound." Public property they were not, until he, the Great Benefactor of the Human Race, having subjected and mastered all the Provinces of learning, having supplied all Particulars which he had found deficient, having filled up all Numbers,—made a free gift of his treasures to the world in all future ages.

(2.) *Francis of Verulam restored the Arts.* We are accustomed to think of him as the Man of Science, and as the Philosopher, Natural, Experimental or Contemplative. We have also been taught to regard him before all, as the Statesman, and the distinguished, though unwilling, Lawyer—Politics and the Law being those matters for which he declares himself to be the "least fit."

But what about the *Arts* which he would reconstruct? We know that they were not *Mechanical* Arts, whether Sculpture or Painting, Gardening or Building, Printing, or any kind of handicraft. At the end of the Catalogue of Histories which he required to be written, he says:—"*I care little about the Mechanical Arts themselves; only about those things which they contribute to the equipment of Philosophy.*"

What then were *the* "*Arts*" which he ranks between Sciences and General Knowledge? We maintain that they were the Arts of Poetry in all her many forms, the Poesy, Narrative, Dramatic, and Parabolical, which he himself describes.

(3.) Francis of Verulam presents his acknowledged Philosophical works to the present and future generations as an "Outline" merely, of the project which he had conceived. This is important; it teaches us that these works, the *Advancement of Learning* (and its enlargement in Latin, the *De Augmentis*), the *Novum Organum, Instauration*, &c., are not to be regarded as ordinary scientific works—they are not

subjects for the kind of criticism which is suitable for works of complete and exhaustive research, or of exact and perfected knowledge in any branch of Natural Philosophy. On the contrary, as we have often insisted, these works are *not* works of exact science, they are Maps or Charts intended to guide us to the discovery of those coasts of new-found Lands round which he sailed his solitary ship ; of those Provinces of Learning which, alone, he invaded and mastered ; those vast tracts which he had found waste and barren, those wildernesses impenetratable and unprofitable, where he as "a true pioneer" had cleared the ground, had dug and fertilized the soil, and sown his seed broadcast.

(4.) Francis of Verulam alludes, as usual, to his great scheme as a rebuilding of *Solomon's House*. If we study the history of the English Renaissance, and the simultaneous springing up in all parts of Europe of the great secret societies, we must see that these were nearly all manifestations of the same effort for the Advancement of Learning. Whether or no they recognised each other, they all emanated from one and the same centre, "Our Francis"—sole Architect and Master Builder of the New Solomon's House, the stupendous fabric devised and raised upon sound foundations *by himself*.

Some imagination is needed to realise the magnitude of this self-imposed task—"*A total reconstruction of Sciences, Arts, and all Human Knowledge.*" Let us pause, and allow our minds to draw a deep breath before passing this sentence. That the "Great Master" should have needed assistants, goes without saying; secretaries, amanuenses, cryptographers, shorthand writers, translators, collators ; not to mention printers, designers, and experts in those "mechanical arts which contribute to the equipment of philosophy." At the present hour it seems almost superfluous to add that such persons were bound by oaths of secrecy, and by rules and methods as strict and imperative as those of the ancient mysteries, or of any other archaic Fraternity from which our Francis derived and adapted his own codes and ceremonies.

(5.) It was no ambition for himself, but solicitude for "*the Work*," which urged Francis of Verulam to put forward this "Outline." All other ambition whatsoever seemed poor in his eyes compared with this great work of his, for which, nevertheless, he knew how hard it would be to win faith or credit.

Neither in his own strength did he undertake "that which may seem a thing infinite, and beyond the powers of man,"

but, as he says, in the Dedicatory Epistle, that he wished "if there be any good in what I have to offer, it may be ascribed to the infinite mercy and goodness of God." In the Preface he adds—"wherefore, seeing that these things do not depend upon myself, at the outset of the work I most humbly and fervently pray to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, that, remembering the sorrows of mankind, and the pilgrimage of this our life, wherein we wear out days few and evil, they will vouchsafe through my hands to endow the human family with new mercies."

FRANCIS OF VERULAM,

reasoned thus with himself,

AND JUDGED IT TO BE FOR THE INTEREST OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS THAT THEY SHOULD BE MADE ACQUAINTED WITH HIS THOUGHTS.

Being convinced that the human intellect makes its own difficulties, not using the true helps which are at man's disposal, soberly and judiciously; whence follows manifold ignorance of things, and by reason of that ignorance mischiefs innumerable; he thought all trial should be made, whether that commerce between the mind of man and the nature of things, which is more precious than anything on earth, or at least than anything that is of the earth, might be by any means restored to its perfect and original condition, or, if that may not be, yet reduced to a better condition than that in which it now is. Now that the errors which have hitherto prevailed, and which will prevail for ever should (if the mind be left to go its own way), either by the natural force of the understanding or by help of the aids and instruments of Logic, one by one correct themselves, was a thing not to be hoped for; because the primary notions of things which the mind readily and passively imbibes, stores up and accumulates (and it is from them that all the rest flow) are false, confused, and overhastily abstracted from the facts; nor are the secondary and subsequent notions less arbitrary and inconstant; whence it follows that the entire fabric of human reason which we employ in the inquisition of nature, is badly put together and built up, and like some magnificent structure without any

foundation. For while men are occupied in admiring and applauding the false powers of the mind, they pass by and throw away those true powers, which if it be supplied with the proper aids and can itself be content to wait upon nature instead of vainly attempting to overrule her, are within its reach.

There was but one course left therefore, to try the whole thing anew upon a better plan, and to commence a total reconstruction of Sciences, Arts, and all Human Knowledge, raised upon the proper foundations. And this, though in the project and undertaking it may seem a thing infinite, and beyond the powers of man, yet when it comes to be dealt with, it will be found sound and sober, much more so than what has been done hitherto. For of this there is some issue; whereas in what is now done in the matter of science there is only a whirling round about, and perpetual agitation, ending where it began.

And although he was well aware how solitary an enterprise it is, and how hard a thing to win faith and credit for, nevertheless he was resolved not to abandon either it or himself; nor to be deterred from trying and entering upon that one path which is alone open to the human mind. For better it is to make a beginning of that which may lead to something, than to engage in a perpetual struggle and pursuit in courses which have no exit. And certainly the two ways of contemplation are much like those two ways of action so much celebrated, in this—that the one, arduous and difficult in the beginning, leads out at last into the open country; while the other, seeming at first sight easy and free from obstruction, leads to pathless and precipitous places.

Moreover, because he knew not how long it might be before these things would occur to anyone else, judging especially from this, that he has found no man hitherto who has applied his mind to the like, he resolved to publish at once so much as he has been able to complete. The cause of which haste was not ambition for himself, but solicitude for the work; that in case of his death there might remain some outline and project of that which he had conceived, and some evidence likewise of his honest mind and inclination towards the benefit of the Human Race. Certain it is that all other ambition whatsoever, seemed poor in his eyes compared with the work which he had in hand; seeing that the matter at issue is either nothing, or a thing so great that it may well be content with its own merit, without seeking other recompense.

BEN JONSON'S "POET-APE."

MR. SIDNEY LEE, in his article on Shakespeare in the "Dictionary of National Biography," after quoting Chettle and Jonson, says, "No other contemporary left on record any impression of Shakespeare's personal character." The passage he quotes from Chettle's "Kind Heart's Dream" has been shown not to apply to Shakespeare, so that the only contemporary writer who seems to have known anything personally of Shakespeare is Ben Jonson, all the other allusions of the time are references to the works published as Shakespeare's by writers who learned from the title-page that they were written by him, much in the same way as the reviewers of the sixties supposed the author of "Adam Bede" to be a man named George Eliot.

What Ben Jonson's real opinion of Shakespeare was we can only judge from such allusions in his plays as can be shown to point to him, the passage Mr. Lee quotes from his "Discoveries" and the panegyric prefixed to the folio of 1623 having been written after Jonson came under Bacon's influence. I think such an allusion can be traced in the prologue to Jonson's "Poetaster" taken in conjunction with his sonnet on Poet-Ape. The prologue is spoken by Envy, who utters the following lines:—

> Are there no players here? no poet-apes
> That come with basilisk's eyes, whose forked tongues
> Are steeped in venom, as their hearts in gall?

Jonson would appear to have had in his mind Act iii., Scene II of *Henry VI.* (part II) (a play he is supposed previously to have ridiculed in the prologue to "Every Man in his Humour"), for at line 321 we read:—

> *Poison* be their drink
> *Gall* worse than *gall*, the daintiest that they taste
> Their sweetest shade a grove of cypress trees
> Their chiefest prospect murdering *basilisks.*

At line 259 we find:—

> Were there a serpent seen with *forked tongue*

Let us now turn to Jonson's Epigram on "Poet-Ape":—

> Poor Poet-Ape that would be thought our chief
> Whose works are e'en the grippery of wit
> For brokage is become so bold a thief
> As we, the robbed, leave rags and pity it.

At first he made low shifts, would pick and glean
Buy the reversion of old plays: now grown
To a little wealth and credit in the scene
He takes up all, makes each man's wit his own,
And told of this he slights it. Tut such crimes
The sluggish gaping auditor devours;
He marks not whose 'twas first, and after times
May judge it to be his as well as ours
Fool! as if half eyes will not know a fleece
From locks of wool, or shreds from the whole piece.

Who except Shakespeare could possibly have any claim to be considered the chief of the dramatists?

"Poet-Ape" was a player who had attained "a little wealth and credit" and who tinkered up old plays for the stage, and wished to parade in his borrowed plumes as foremost in the ranks of the dramatists.

Jonson in the "Poetaster" ridiculed Marston and Dekker in the characters of Crispinus and Demetrius. If Shakespeare had not been alluded to why should he have administered a "purge" to Jonson, as he is said to have done in The Return from Parnasus? "O that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow. He brought up Horace giving the poets a pill; but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit."

Can it be believed that the wisest, wittiest, kindliest, most human of all the human race should have lived for fifty-three years and died without leaving any vestige or trace of his personality upon his age, beyond the faint praise of Jonson. "He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature?" That versed, as he was, in the ways and converse of kings, princes, philosophers, divines, he should have been content to spend the last seven or more years of his life at Stratford without society, and as far as we know without books, without correspondence, intent only on exhorting small debts from his neighbours and inclosing the common lands? To believe that a man who lived the life of Shakespeare, as shown from our meagre records, could have written the plays, requires far more credulity than to suppose that the plays were for personal reasons published (as Puttenham tells us "notable gentlemen in the court" were in the habit of publishing their works) "without their owne names to it, as if it were a discredit for a gentleman to seeme learned or show himself amorous of any good art."

E. S. Alderson.

"FROM THE DUST OF OLD OBLIVION RAKED."

Subjects for Research.

IT is very necessary for a due understanding of the life and times of "Francis Bacon," and for just appreciation of recent discoveries, that we study diligently the *older* histories and the *private* papers of the reign of Elizabeth, now easily accessible through the printed reports or calendars of the Government Historical Commission. Many particulars divulged by these important documents have been utilised by careful historians, like Agnes Strickland in her "*Queens of England.*" But some main points which pierce to the heart of our subject have been curiously glossed or glided over, glanced at, but not arrested, faced, and publicly cross-examined.

May we urge those who desire to get to the bottom of things, to find truth, though she be hid in the centre, to join hands with us in tracing out, by true and painstaking research, the *private and hidden* life, aims, and achievements of that miracle of men, Francis, Viscount St. Alban? Recent discoveries, which we hope soon to make public, render it the more needful that our knowledge of ascertained facts should be accurate, and the facts themselves demonstrable. It is because experience daily proves the shallowness of popular knowledge, showing how much is the mere echo, the incorrect reiteration of incorrect and often disproved traditions, that we venture to suggest to the few who love laborious research that they should undertake this particular investigation, and pursue it to the end with method and persistency. Some, at least, of our fraternity should be armed and well prepared for the coming controversy.

We recommend such readers to con again the familiar pages of Strickland's "*Queens*," vol. vi. *Elizabeth* (especially pp. 21—39); also the articles "*Elizabeth*," "*Dudley*," and "*Essex*" in *Chalmers' Dictionary*, and in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

The three distinguished persons specified are those whom, at present, it most concerns us to track and follow into their most secret recesses, spying out all their doings. This, in the case of Elizabeth *when Queen*, it is not easy to do; for assuredly that clever, crafty, iron-willed Sovereign would take good care that matters which she desired to have concealed should be peremptorily suppressed, tell-tale documents destroyed, tongues which ran too roundly in men's heads

silenced, and their owners "put to the perpetual wink for aye." But murder will out, and truth cannot be hid. Letters, and the memoranda, affidavits, confessions, and other documents continually brought to light, force thoughtful minds to reconsider old-established traditions. Modern research must in the end materially affect unprejudiced judgment regarding the lion-hearted Elizabeth, or, as she desired to be called, "The Virgin Queen." Read, then, the following books:—

Haynes' "State Papers," 1548 (specially pp. 94—108, 361, 364).
The Throckmorton MSS.
Wood's Annals.
Ballard's Memoirs.
Andrew's "Continuation."
Herbert's "Henry VII."
Ellis's "Specimens."
Birch's Memorials of Queen Elizabeth.
Strype's Annals.
Seward's Biographiana.
Lord Orford's Royal and Noble Authors (edited by Park).
Hayward's "Edward VI."
Leti's Life of Queen Elizabeth.

Of ROBERT DUDLEY, EARL OF LEICESTER, see "*Leicester's Commonwealth*" and "*Leicester's Ghost*," 1641 (*Brit. Mus.*, 599, a. 30). This curious book, although put forward and abused as the work of Robt. Parsons, Jesuit, is evidently full of genuine matter. Its statements were never confuted, though a list is given (pp. 14, and 23—28) of the deaths which he compassed of Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, the Earl of Sheffield, Cardinal Chatillon, Lady Lennox, Mistress Draycott, Robin Honnies, and Gates (50), of his intended murder of the Earl of Ormonde (38), his treacheries to the Earl of Sussex, and his devices for the overthrow of Sir Christopher Hatton and the Earl of Shrewsburie (36, 149, 150). "By his art of poisoning, Leicester holdeth all his foes, as well as many of his friends in fear. . . . The cruellest, wickedest, most perilous and perfidious man under heaven."

"*The Perfect Picture of a Favourite: A Secret Memoir of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester*" (1708, *3rd Edit.*, *Brit. Mus.* 10816, *b.b.* 22). This describes "his rise and fall; his excessive power and wealth; his cruel oppressions; exorbitant grants made to him; his ambitious aim at the Crown; his lusts, hypocrasie, and irreligion," &c. A collation of the editions of 1708 and 1721 gives the attractive side of his character: "A man of very comely person, a noble and graceful aspect, engaging behaviour, and courtly address: a wit capable at once of entertaining agreeably, designing deeply . . . a presence which commanded attention and respect.

'*Inerat vultui, sermonque amœna quœdum majestas.*'" The suggestive words in Latin were said of Robert Dudley by Grotius.

"*The History of Reynard the Fox*" is another tract in which "the violence and rapaciousness, the craft and dissimulation of the Earl of Leicester, is excellently set forth."

See also Pettigrew's "*Inquiry into the Death of Amy Robsart*" and Dr. Drake's History, where Strada is quoted.

To the foregoing should be added a careful inspection of the "Political Tracts" (16th century). The following references may be useful:—

Cotton, F. vi. 211, 2086; B. vii. 11; C. vii., xvi.; E. 12.
Harleian, 180, 252, 253, 847, 1130, 1582, 4149, 4228, 4243, 4808, 6403.
Lansdowne, 94. 1197. "Home Friend" advocates the Queen's marriage with an English nobleman.
Sloane, 303, 223—240.
Hatfield, or *Cecil* (Part VI.).

"	"	Vol. i., 252—257.	Arthur Gunter's "Submission" concerning the death of Amy Robsart.
"	"	" 792.	Thos. Lever to Sir Francis Knollys and Sir William Cecil (1560). Speaks of a "suspicion and muttering" regarding the death of Amy Robsart.
"	"	" 795.	Arthur Gunter's "Information" concerning the same.
"	"	" 796.	Lord Robert Dudley to Sir R. Cecil concerning the same.
"	"	" 797, 801, and 255, 810, 811.	A. Gunter's "Declaration" concerning the report that the Queen will marry Lord Robert Dudley.
"	"	Vol. ii. 165—170.	Baptista di Trento tells the Queen that the Earl of Leicester had resolved to make himself King of England by a marriage with her; this letter is written in Italian.

The death of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, in 1588, is shrouded in some mystery. It appears probable that he received measure for measure, and that he died by the poison which he had so often administered to those who stood in his way (see Lodge ii. 379, and the *Hatfield Papers*, vol. iii. 356-7, 359-360).

(*To be continued.*)

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editors of "Baconiana."

SIRS,—In the last number of BACONIANA the frequent question, "Why, if Bacon wrote the 'Shakespeare Plays' did he neglect to acknowledge them?" was alluded to and answered with appreciation and ingenuity by E. V. Tanner. May I point out that the same question was, not asked, but most satisfactorily answered by Dr. Stubbs, Dean of Ely, while preaching the Shakespeare sermon in the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon, a month or two ago. I quote his words as reported in the *Daily News* of the following day.

"He (Shakespeare) taught the most gracious and gentle precepts, too good almost to have been listened to if men had quite known what they were receiving. There were some things in Shakespeare he (the Dean) almost fancied that he might have been burnt for had he been a theologian; just as certainly there were things about politics, about civil liberty, which, had he been a politician or a statesman, would have brought him to the block. But God made him a player," this pathetic little touch suggests very plainly that if by any chance the author was not a player, he could not act more wisely than by putting on the garb of one, and to a Baconian recalls Bacon's plea to his Maker: "I have, though in a despised weed, sought the good of all men." "God made him a player. so," continues the Dean, "he could teach a message to his age which it much needed; lessons of peace, gentleness, mercy, patience, long-suffering."

If Dean Stubbs, standing in that pulpit, were not altogether above suspicion, one might almost imagine that, in uttering these last words, he had in his mind the man to whom Peter Boener says a monument should be erected "as a memorable example to all of virtue, kindness, peacefulness and patience," rather than the litigious, and not very moral William Shakespeare, of Stratford-on-Avon. Leaving this out of the question, however, Dr. Stubbs distinctly proves to his own satisfaction and that doubtless of his audience, that, if Francis Bacon, statesman, politician, and, in a sense, theologian, had acknowledged the authorship of the "Shakespeare Plays," not only would his body have suffered at the stake or on the block, but the "prophetic" voice would have been silenced, and the much needed lesson to the world left unuttered. Surely if Shakepearians are agreed in this, no further argument on that point from Baconians is necessary.

HELEN HINTON STEWART.

Coodham, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, 5th June, 1899.